

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-46 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Stas et al. (US 6,025,869). In light of foregoing remarks presented herein, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections and allowance of the subject application.

Claim Rejections Under 102

The Applicants respectfully assert that independent claim 1 is allowable because Stas fails to teach, suggest or disclose all the elements of the claim. Specifically, the Stas fails to disclose the steps of:

“receiving a content-based indicator indicative of the content of the user discernible information and timing information indicative of a reference time;
selecting a content-based specification and a first finite time range specification associated with the selected content-based specification;
comparing the first finite time range specification with the reference time;
allowing user review of user discernible information without user input or comparison of received content-based indicator with a content-based specification if the reference time is outside the first finite time range specification;
comparing the selected content-based specification with the received content-based indicator when the reference time falls within the first finite time range specification; and
impairing the program signal if the received content-based indicator exceeds the content-based specification.”

The claimed invention allows for the un-impeded user review of user discernible

information, ie., the watching of any TV program, during a time period that falls outside a selected time range and the content based control of user review of user discernible information during a time period that falls inside the selected time range. For example, if the selected finite time range specification is 5 am to 9 pm, during this finite time range TV program A is blocked or a user's viewing of program A is impaired if its content exceeds the content based specification. However, from 9 pm to 5 am, which is a period of time, outside the finite time range of 5 am to 9 pm, program A can be viewed without the inconvenience of having to manually disable the V-Chip and without the risk of forgetting to manually re-enable the V-Chip once viewing is complete.

Stas fails to disclose, teach or suggest this control method. Moreover, Stas fails to make any mention of receiving a content-based indicator indicative of the content of the user discernible information, selecting a content-based specification, and, if within a finite time period, comparing the content-based indicator with the content based specification. Applicants have carefully reviewed column 8, lines 10-65 and column 10, lines 11-57 and are unable to discern where, as the examiner asserts, Stas discloses or teaches that

“MP 438 further compares one or more selected rating with the received rating and when the reference time falls within the restricted time period(s) or “range” and generates a block control signal to block “impairing” the programs(s), channels(s), etc., “program signal” in response to a block control signal from MP 438, if the received content rating exceeds the selected content rating ... not e that encoding is under EIA Standard and the parent can block by program(s), channel(s), time of a day, ... based on the content rating “subject matter category” of the program to permit the child to only watch selected program(s) at specific time period(s)... (Page 7)

A close examination of Fig. 6 and associated disclosure in columns 8 and 10 reveals that Stas only discusses the parent being able to program a blackout or lock out time period, a channel lockout during a time period and a specific program lockout based on a channel lockout for a specific period of time.

FIG. 6a is a flow diagram illustrating the different modes under which main control unit 10 operates. In block 600, the "select" key is pressed on either main control unit 10 or remote control unit 12. Block 602 represents selection by the user of the supervised viewing mode. Under the supervised viewing mode, main control unit 10 permits television viewing only during specified times, on the specified channels, and within the time limit previously programmed. Thus, a parent can completely block a specific channel, completely block use of the TV during selected times, block a selected program by blocking a channel during a selected time, block any combination of channels, time, and programs, and set a total time limit on the number of viewing hours per day, week, or month. During a blocked time or when the viewing time limit has been exceeded, main control unit 10 cuts off transmission of the video signal to the TV receiver 20, and displays instead a default message such as "THIS CHANNEL IS BLOCKED." Col. 8, lines 11-27.

There is no discussion or teaching in Stas that a content based specification is selected and then compared with a content indicator provided in the transmitted signal. Any content based screening is done manually by the parent in the program mode while referring to an channel guide to block complete use of TV or block viewing of a specified channel for a given period of time.

Stas' reference to the EIA Standards is in regard to data that identifies the channel and

makes no reference to content or subject matter ratings.

According to the present invention, if a video signal from a blocked channel is encoded under the EIA Standard, "Recommended Practice for Line 21 Data Service", promulgated by the Engineering Department, Electronic Industries Association, described in ANSI/EIA-608-1994, main control unit 10 is able to block such a channel, even if the incoming video signal is tampered with and masqueraded as a video signal from a permitted channel. This is because, under the EIA standard, channel identification (i.e. call letters and native channel) can be provided in a data packet transmitted during the vertical blanking interval between frames, or "line 21". Main control unit can identify the source of the video signal by examining this data packet in line 21 and comparing the channel identification information with the programmed list of blocked channels. Col. 8, lines 34-45.

In contrast to Stas, the method recited in claim 1 automatically allows unimpeded viewing once the specified time period has ended and automatically enables V-chip or content based controlled viewing once the specified time period begins. Any user, such as a parent or adult, can view the consumer electronics device without intrusion from the V-chip (see, for example, application, p. 13, ll. 11-22). Also, there is no concern with the parent inadvertently leaving the V-chip in a disabled state, because the claimed system is automatically re-enabled upon the beginning of the next time period. This reduces the risk that a child will gain access to the television and view restricted programming without consent.

Because Stas fails to teach the claimed method as recited in claim 1, the Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claim 1 be withdrawn. Also, because independent claims 13, 19 and 25 include language similar to that of claim 1, Applicants respectfully request

that the rejections to those claims be withdrawn as well.

Conclusion

Applicant's respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 13, 19 and 25 are in condition for allowance. Furthermore, because dependent claims 2-12, 14-18, 20-24 and 26-46 depend therefrom, Applicant's respectfully submit that these claims are in like condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the application is requested. If the Examiner has any questions or comments, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (949) 567-6700.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 1, 2005

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